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FM AMEMBASSY DAKAR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4766
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 0170
RUEHLC/AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE PRIORITY 0866
RUEHLI/AMEMBASSY LISBON PRIORITY 0719
RUEHLU/AMEMBASSY LUANDA PRIORITY 0373
RUEHTO/AMEMBASSY MAPUTO PRIORITY 0406
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DAKAR 000835

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR AF/RSA, PRM/AFR, DRL/PHD AND AF/W
ACCRA ALSO FOR WARP
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/05/2016

TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PHUM](#) [PREF](#) [SNAR](#) [PU](#) [SG](#)

SUBJECT: IT MAY BE TIME FOR DIPLOMACY TO END THE FIGHTING
IN NORTHERN GUINEA-BISSAU

REF: A. USDAO DAKAR SG IIR 8 886 0086 06 DTG 030812Z APR

06

[1](#)B. USDAO DAKAR SG IIR 8 886 0084 06 DTG 291649 MAR 06

Classified By: CDA Robert P. Jackson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The fighting in northern Guinea-Bissau was a major theme of Charge and PolOff,s March 29-31 meetings with Bissau-Guinean leaders. Charge told Major General Tagme that parliamentarians and the media have a right to raise questions about the ongoing operations, which have displaced more than 8,000 people to date. Tagme did not respond directly but clearly believes that members of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC) have supported Salif Sadio,s MFDC faction, which has purchased landmines and weapons from the sale of narcotics. Landmines are slowing the "guerilla army,s8 advance against the MFDC guerillas. UNOGBIS, ECOWAS, the CPLP and the ICRC are all examining ways to implement President Vieira,s request to help find a diplomatic solution. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (C) Charge and PolOff traveled to Guinea-Bissau, March 29-31. The conflict between Movement of Democratic Forces of the Casamance (MFDC) factions and the Bissau-Guinean Army dominated some of our meetings. Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces (CHOD) Major General Baptista Tagme Na Waie and four of his senior officers) all International Military Training and Education (IMET) program graduates -- spent 30 minutes with Charge and PolOff on March 30. Tagme said that the Bissau-Guinean armed forces have captured four of MFDC Atika leader Salif Sadio,s eight bases) all of which are near Sao Domingos. Sadio and his men are putting up stiff resistance, however, using four 81-millimeter Soviet-made bazookas and one heavy machine gun, as well as both tank and anti-personnel mines to protect themselves. Although the MFDC may be running low on ammunition, the mines are impeding progress. Tagme noted that the MFDC has mined the road from Sao Domingos to Varela but that the road from Ziguinchor to Bissau remains open. Tagme described MFDC human rights abuses, including beheading one village leader, and its operations as an independent power. Tagme felt sure that the MFDC acquires supplies from narcotics sales. However, he was uncertain whether the MFDC confined itself to selling marijuana or had branched out into the cocaine trade.

[1](#)3. (C) Charge told Tagme that if he had evidence that

politicians had helped the MFDC (Ref A), he should share that evidence with police and prosecutors. Charge insisted that members of the National Popular Assembly (ANP) and the media had the right) even the duty) to raise legitimate questions about the military campaign. Characteristically, Tagme did not reply directly, saying only that although the MFDC has representatives in every major town in Guinea-Bissau, the rebel group has no right to operate from Bissau-Guinean territory. In meetings with President Joao Bernardo &Nino8 Vieira, Prime Minister Aristides Gomes, Foreign Minister Isaac Monteiro, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister Afonso Te, UNOGIS Representative Joao Honwana, and International Monetary Fund ResRep Ousmane Dore, Charge also stressed concern about Tagme,s comments. Te said that Vieira had told Tagme to cease and desist. For his part, Vieira said Tagme was very frustrated with the length of the campaign and the loss of life. Other interlocutors emphasized that most Bissau-Guineans had expected that Salif Sadio and his men would be driven into Senegal, killed or captured within three days. No one had anticipated that the operation would go beyond three weeks. Vieira indicated that contrary to other reports, the armed forces had only suffered six) not 60) combat deaths through March 30. Vieira told us he would ask the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to attempt to contact Sadio and mediate with him. UNOGBIS, the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are also seeking a ceasefire as a prelude to a diplomatic initiative and/or solution.

14. (C) COMMENT: The Prime Minister was in Dakar for consultations through March 30. The Defense Minister and Chief of the Naval Staff had been in Dakar the previous week, and President Vieira came to Dakar for April 3-5, where he

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met with Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade, Cape Verdean President Pedro Pires, Congolese President and OAU Chairman Denis Sassou Nguessou, Gabonese President Omar Bongo and Libyan leader Mouammar Qadhafi. He did reportedly ask for assistance in seeking Sadio's exit through negotiations. Meanwhile, Embassy believes credible reports that the Government of Senegal is providing food, fuel, ammunition and intelligence for the Bissau-Guinean military operation. Senegal may also eventually be asked to provide combat pay to prevent a repetition of the October 2004 mutiny. Meanwhile, Senegal continues its efforts to seal the border and to give the appearance of scrupulously respecting its December 2004 ceasefire with the MFDC. At this point, a diplomatic solution may be attractive to both the GOGB and Sadio, and it might allow the 8,500 or so displaced people to return to their homes. END COMMENT.
JACKSON